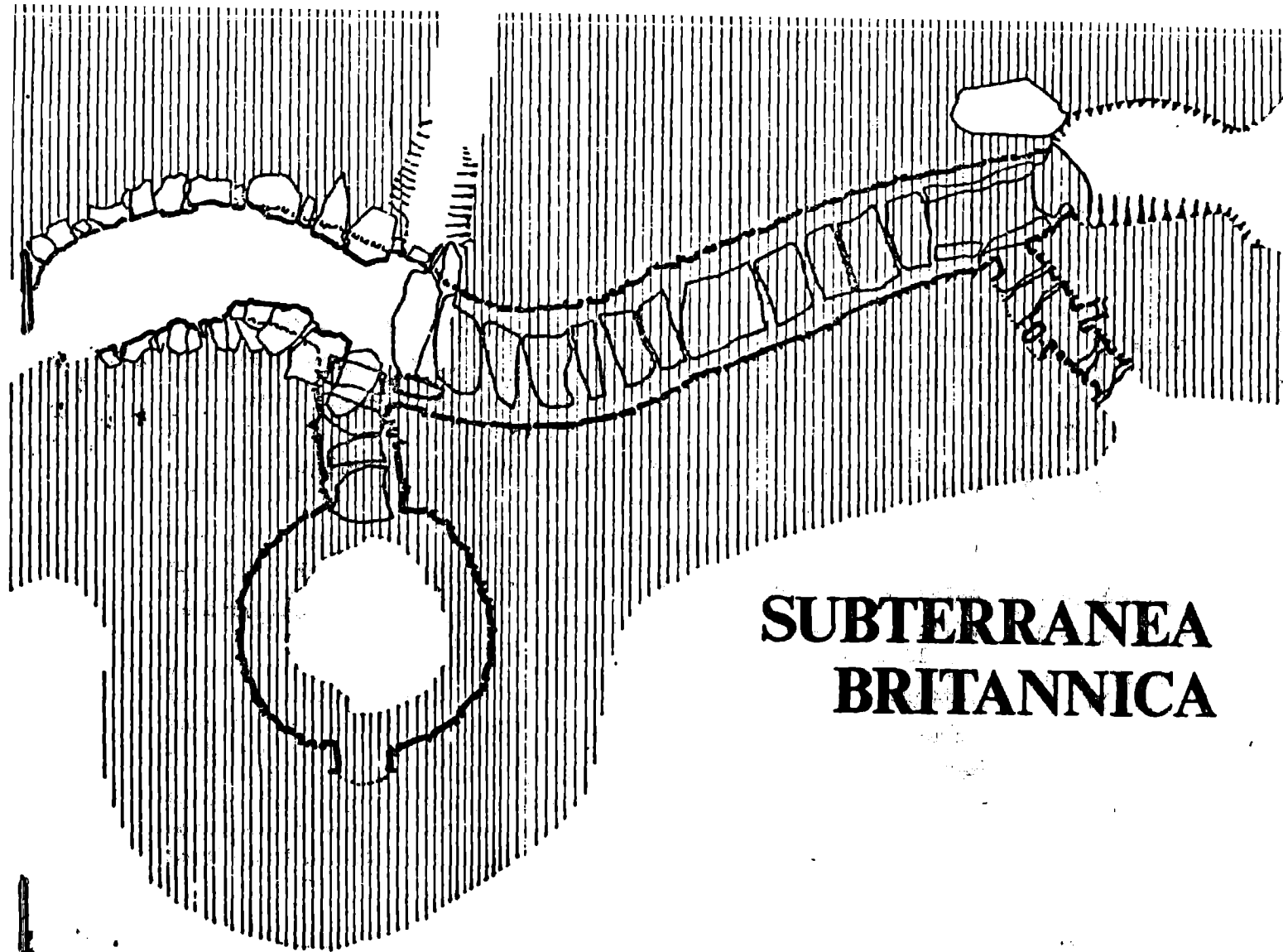




# SUBTERRANEA BRITANNICA

**Bulletin No. 2**

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Subterranea Britannica is in association with Société Française D'Étude des Souterrains of France, and Arbeitskreis für Erdstallforschung of Germany.

## EDITORIAL

We are delighted to have Mr. Neil Beacham as our Honorary Librarian and are grateful to him for the depository arrangements in Fortress House, Savile Row, London, W1X 1AB which are being formulated so that plans, maps, etc. will be available for members at the usual times. A Classification of underground structures is also in hand, consequently the glossary of technical terms etc. has been held back for the time being.

A coach trip to the Flint Mines at Grimes Graves, Norfolk was made on the 3rd. May. We were allowed (including the children - much to their pleasure) into Pit I. The afternoon's outing proved to be most successful.

The planning stage of Phase I of the Royston Pilot Study, which is in the nature of an experiment, commenced in March and field work has already begun. An area in Nottingham is also under discussion with a view to run concurrently with Royston which will be a useful comparison.

We request that members submit articles on the underground cavities of which they have experience. Also, that appropriate books read by members, other than those already mentioned in our bibliography, be brought to our attention. Such material, if sent to Mrs. Sylvia P. Beamon, Publication Secretary of 16 Honeyway, Royston, Herts. SG8 7ES may prove to be of interest for our future Bulletins. Specific research questions may also be asked when it is hoped there will be an exchange of information, and that answers will be forth-coming from the various experts in their respective fields.

Daphne Duncan.  
EDITOR.

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### WINTER HALF-DAY CONFERENCE

The Subterranea Britannica's Winter Conference was held on 11th January, 1975, at the Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. The meeting was well attended and interesting lectures were given by Mr. Adey Horton on 'My Troglodyte Home at Trôo, France'; Mr. Alan MacCormick on 'The Caves of Nottingham'; and Mr. Alan Fleck on 'Excavations at Newark Bay, Deerness, Orkney'. Detailed reports on the two latter talks are to be found in this Bulletin.

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### ITEMS SUBMITTED BY OUR SISTER SOCIETIES IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

The following entries were submitted too late for the first Bulletin, the former from Professor Raymond Mauny was due to the French Postal strike.

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### SOME PROBLEMS OF SUBTERRANEAN STUDIES

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to offer a few words of welcome to our sister society Subterranea Britannica which has exactly the same aims as ourselves.

We must not forget that it was one of your compatriots, S. Baring-Could, who was the promotor of the studies on our own country's souterrains, with his pioneer book Cliff Castles and Cave-Dwellings of Europe, published in 1911.

As one would expect, most of his examples were chosen from Western France, which is not surprising because the number of our souterrains is far greater than in most countries of Europe, with the exception of Southern Germany.

One would have expected to find the same situation in Great Britain for our countries have so many cultural points in common. But the fact that England itself has virtually no souterrains apart from Cornwall (whereas they are numerous in Scotland and Ireland) is a most interesting point to study. Why are they to be found by the score North of the Firth of Tay and not South of it? We have exactly the same problem in France; why are they so numerous in Central West France and practically absent in Eastern France, then after a gap of some 400 km. (250 miles) they are found once more in the valley of the Danube? Why are there no medieval ones in Brittany but only Iron Age ones being similar to those in Cornwall and Ireland?

All this has to be studied carefully, country by country, and even county by county. In some regions 'hypogea' were dug for graves or funeral cults; and in others as underground dependences of farms; perhaps elsewhere, places of refuge against the invader or enemy; sometimes as hiding places where "heretic" cults were celebrated and opposed by the Inquisition as on the Continent. And often a souterrain could be dug for some of the aforesaid reasons, yet was used for another... Many of our French souterrains were used in 1914-18 and 1939-45 as shelters against bombing raids or by the Resistance.

The fact that neither Normandy nor most of England have souterrains, in my opinion, is no accident: both were firmly kept in hand by the Danes and Vikings, then the Normans and were well administrated from the IXth to the XIIIth century. The kings were obeyed, the nobles protected their own subjects and did not plunder their neighbour's, whereas in the rest of France the conditions were reversed; Viking, Hungarian, Saracen invasions, general insecurity, powerless kings, and chiefly the endless wars between feudal lords, village against village. All had to look after their security, resulting in the digging of souterrains. At the beginning of the XIIIth century, the Inquisition pursuing the numerous "heretic" sects (some of which under the pretext of religion had underground parties with all the lights extinguished), the Council of Toulouse of 1229 ordered all the souterrains to be destroyed or filled in.

What the exact situation in Britain is, I do not know. Has it been studied carefully by archaeologists having a special interest in souterrains? It would be most astonishing if none exist under the earliest mottes (castles), such as shown on the Bayeux tapestry which were to be replaced by stone castles, chiefly in regions of insecurity like the borders or marches of Wales, Scotland and Ireland. But did they have the example before them of souterrains, as their contemporaries did in France?

Roman and medieval quarries under or near the old cities might have been organised as places of refuge during the invasions or wars, and the example of Royston Cave shows the kind of surprise that might be met with, as underground chapels (Templars?) or places of "heretic" cults.

Latin scholars and archivists will have to read carefully the accounts of religious persecutions and look for references of these "heresies". A normal place where they were practised being caves (weavers were especially attractive, for girls came there to spin at night). Prof. M. Broëns, of the University of Barcelona, has found many texts relative to such practices during the XII - XIIIth centuries for France and South Germany. There is no reason why Britain would not have known the same.

Raymond MAUNY  
President of the Société Française  
D'Étude des Souterrains

# STUDY OF ERDSTALLE IN THE DANUBIAN AREA OF GERMANY

Künstliche Höhlen  
in  
Klein-Weikersdorf  
Pfarre Nappersdorf V.UMB.  
Maßstab 1:100

The plan shows a complex network of artificial caves. The main entrance is located on the left side, leading into a large chamber labeled 'J'. From 'J', a passage leads to a smaller chamber labeled 'H'. From 'H', a passage leads to a large chamber labeled 'O'. From 'O', a passage leads to a chamber labeled 'B'. From 'B', a passage leads to a chamber labeled 'C'. From 'C', a passage leads to a large, oval-shaped chamber labeled 'D'. From 'D', a passage leads to a chamber labeled 'A'. From 'A', a passage leads to a chamber labeled 'E'. From 'E', a passage leads to a chamber labeled 'F'. From 'F', a passage leads to a chamber labeled 'K'. From 'K', a passage leads to a chamber labeled 'K'. The plan also shows various passages and chambers labeled with letters and numbers, such as 'a', 'b', 'c', 'd', 'e', 'f', 'g', 'h', 'i', 'j', 'k', 'l', 'm', 'n', 'o', 'p', 'q', 'r', 's', 't', 'u', 'v', 'w', 'x', 'y', 'z'. A north arrow is located in the top right corner, pointing upwards. A scale bar is located in the bottom right corner, indicating a scale of 1:100.

- 4 -

In the late Bronze Age (1200-700 B.C.) when new cultural influences were widespread in Germany, man began to construct underground dwellings, work-rooms, hiding-places, refuge-galleries, shelters, store-rooms, and exploited them as quarries, wells or water-catchments, or "quanats". He sometimes disposed of the dead in caves, and from this it was a natural transition to other underground structures that were intended for the cult of the dead, or similar religious rites.

A special interest attaches to the Erdställe, which figure as a phenomenon among underground structures. "Erdstall" means an artificial souterrain, of which the medieval "stall" does not signify a stable but an abode. There are several hundreds of them, that have been explored, but there are thousands more that have been either destroyed or remained undiscovered. Most of them are revealed by accident. The accompanying plan is of a typical Erdställe.

From the middle of a court, or from cellars and sheds, sometimes in the open field, a narrow hole opens, at the end of which is a labyrinth of galleries and chambers. The galleries mostly, are lower than the chambers which do not allow an upright stance. Both of them are vaulted either in the form of cupolas or pointed arches. On advancing one has to overcome passages so narrow and low, that it would be impossible to turn round. At the bottom or in the ceiling, or situated in the middle height of the walls, it is often necessary to crawl through holes, which in diameter are about 1 ft. 4 ins. (0.41 m.). Achievements of such kind can only be accomplished by the agile. These holes lead to other parts of the souterrain, an upper or lower level. Corridors and chambers sometimes hold rebates, into which "doors" had been fitted, or they contain notches for the reception of beams, to close the souterrain from the inside. Generally, the Erdställe extend no more than 40 yards (43.07 m.). There never seems to be an exit in undisturbed souterrains.

#### To what period do the Erdställe belong ?

Apart from fragments of pottery, charcoal and ashes, almost nothing was found in the Erdställe that could enable us to date them accurately. The medieval (13th/14th century) pottery which is always discovered in the debris, indicates only the last utilization, but not the origin of the souterrains. The names however, give us reason to believe that the majority originate from the second half of the first millenium after Christ.

#### What were the functions of the Erdställe ?

There are different opinions concerning the function of the Erdställe, one section regards them as refuges in times of trouble, while others interpret them as religious sites.

The advocates of the refuge theory refer to :

- Their frequent connection with medieval dwellings and to arrangements in which they see elaborate preparations for defence, such as lateral recesses, suitable for assailing the enemy in flank and rear, pitfalls and interior doorways.

Those who are in favour of the religious view say :

- The inspirations for undertaking such difficult work, can only have been of a religious nature. According to popular belief the Erdställe were the abode of spirits.
- The old, invalid or timid can never have resorted to those dark, wet and extremely uncomfortable buildings with their low, narrow passages, nearly

impassable holes and their low range of vaults. In times of trouble, our ancestors have taken refuge in the vast woods, taking their domestic animals with them.

- The enemy would not follow refugees into dark unknown caverns, but would set fires at the entrance of the Erdställe or the neighbouring buildings, and thus suffocate the unfortunate inmates.
- The Erdställe have nothing in common with the vast underground galleries of the North of France, such as may be seen for example in Naours, Domqueur or Hiermont. These "souterrains" are furnished with a hundred or more spacious chambers whereas the Erdställe have four or five tiny rooms.

Karl Schwarzfischer  
President of Arbeitskreis für Erdstallforschung.

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THE TUNNEL FROM THE OLD MANOR HOUSE, FOWLMERE, CAMBRIDGE.



Photograph  
taken by  
Christopher  
Montague.

View of passage travelling South East.

On the 8th December, 1974 members of Subterranea Britannica examined the tunnel which leads from the cellar of the Old Manor House, London Road, Fowlmere, Cambridge, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Sheldrick.

The premises are thought to have been built in the 16th century, and had been three dwellings rented by tenants from the Lord of the Manor. The present family has lived there since 1965 and are going to use it as one dwelling, two parts have already been renovated and the remaining section from where the tunnel leaves is hoped to be completed soon.

The passage is cut straight into the chalk leading N.E. from the bricklined cellar wall. The height of the entrance is 5 ft. 9 ins. (1.76 m.) approximately, and quickly narrows to 33 ins. (0.84 m.) high as it approaches a side passage on the left which goes off in a westerly direction and has collapsed a little way along. This short passage had been filled with earth at sometime and Mr. Sheldrick recently removed it to find the exit opened into his yard. The main passage widens again, and at a distance of 27 ft.

(8.30 m.) from this side passage there are postholes and shallow insets both sides in the walls before reaching two 'seats' or cavities, once more on either side, which with slight variations are 23 ins. (0.58 m.) across, 22 ins. (0.56 m.) deep, the actual seat 9 ins. (0.23 m.), situated 10 ins. (0.25 m.) from the floor, and the height from the seat to the top of the hollowed out area being 41 ins. (1.05 m.)

After a further 10 ft. (3.07 m.) the tunnel turns sharply S.E.E. where there is now bricking. Here the passage narrows and slopes upwards which is probably due to packed debris underfoot where the War Memorial overhead is thought to have broken through during construction around 1918, and then repaired. Two more postholes and insets are apparent a short distance from the bend, also lighting niches. From the bend to the exit it is 51 ft. 8 ins. (18.20 m.). Towards the exit itself the tunnel narrows considerably requiring a crawling position. Finally, there are two steps up into the cellar of the lefthand cottage of a pair now named 'Hillview Cottage', and formerly a Grocers shop.

During August of 1922, the passage was made use of to carry electric mains cable from that side of the road to supply the Old Manor House. Various dates are scratched on the walls including 'E.C. Barnes 1933' and 'June 28th Kenzie 1897'.

This is an interim report and full details and records for reference will be deposited in the papers of the Society in Fortress House.

Pamela Goodey, Sylvia Beamon,  
Christopher Montague, Mark Stevenson.

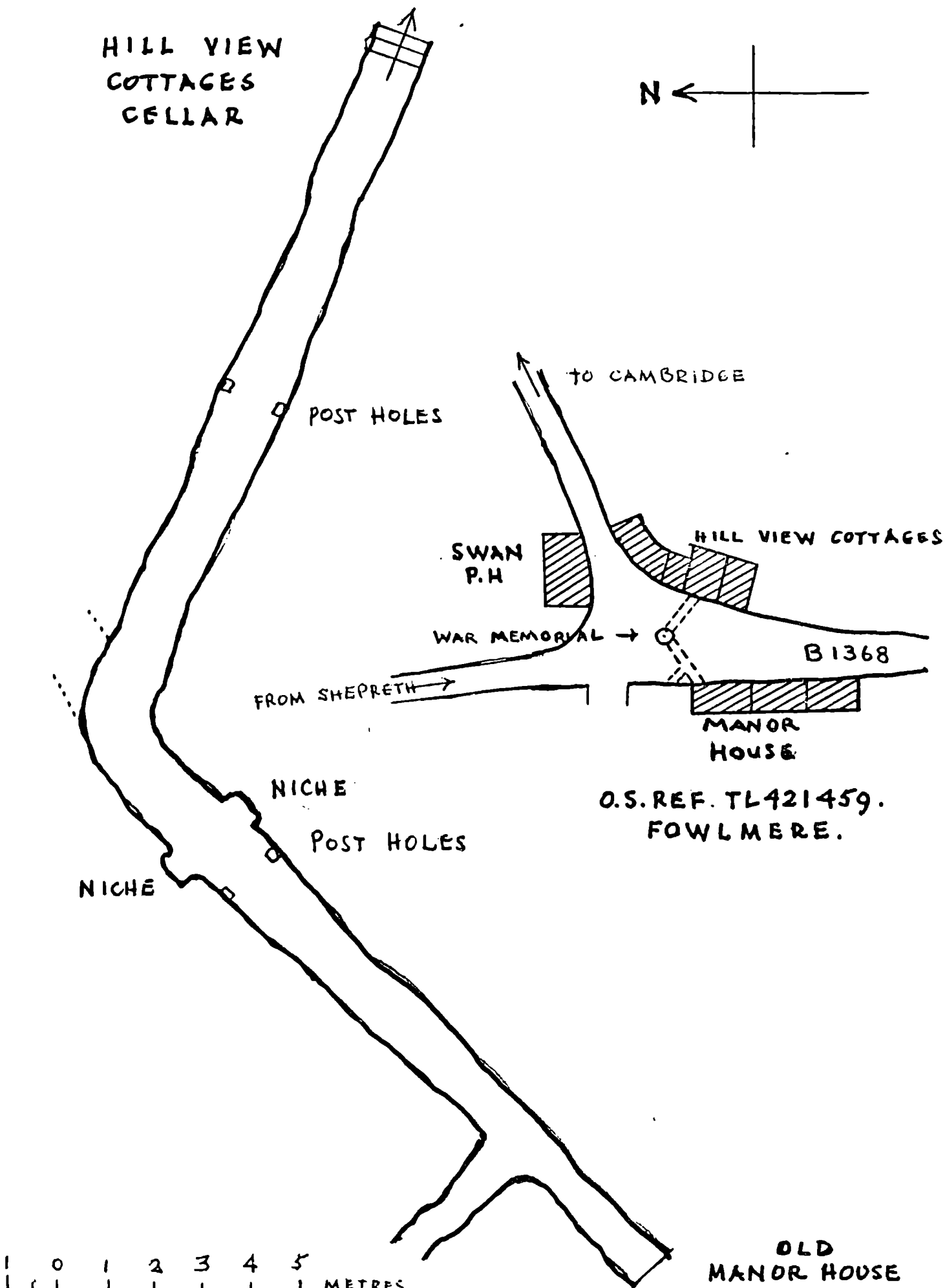
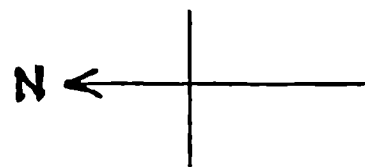
Mr. G. O. Vinter, President of the Cambridge Historical Council and one of our members, has sent us this interesting letter:

'With regard to the tunnel at Fowlmere, I have never come across anything other than the theory presented by Mr. Yorke, one time Rector of Fowlmere, who died in 1932. He wrote an article on John Morden, Rector of Fowlmere, 1610-1644, which was published in The History Teachers' Miscellany, June 1925, pp. 76/7, privately printed, of which I have copies, though I doubt whether there are any existing anywhere else. This rector had his living sequestered during the Cromwellian times, but he remained in the village as he had some land of his own, and Yorke's conclusion is as follows:

"There can be little hesitation in fixing the site of his residence. It is exactly opposite the "Lordship", the old Manor Farm house at the top of the village. In that Lordship, Mr. Edward Aldred the second was living his last years at Fowlmere as tenant of Mr. La Mott the new Lord of the Manor; perhaps the only churchman in the place. The farm that Mr. Morden had rented ever since his first arrival, and which he continued until his deprivation, was probably the farm which he bought. As a yeoman holding, it would have its homestead premises. The house suggested, now divided, until two years ago had its farm-yard perquisites at the back and side. The thing which justifies this identification is the curious underground tunnel from its cellar to the cellar of the "Lordship". Cut in the solid chalk, just big enough for passage in single file, shaped like the figure 7 with two seats excavated in the short arm, an evident bolthole at the crossing leading out to the Lordship rickyard, and another unfinished leading out to the abolished "Swann Inn", there is nothing in the village story to account for it save Mr. Morden's translation from Rectory to farm. Upon the head of anyone using the Church Services or gathering an assemblage to hear them was, for a first conviction a fine of £5. for a second £10., and imprisonment. The Lawful Minister burrowed underground to fulfil his Office."



HILL VIEW  
COTTAGES  
CELLAR



1 0 1 2 3 4 5 METRES

1:100 SCALE

## THE CAVES OF NOTTINGHAM

Although other British towns possess caves and rock cut tunnels Nottingham is unique in the number and date range of its caves which are entirely man-made. In the area of Nottingham formerly occupied by the medieval city, caves occur under most of the older building sites. More than a hundred are now known.

Geology: From Wollaton in the west to Sneinton in the east (about 4 miles) and from the cliffs on which Nottingham Castle and St. Mary's Church stand on its southern edge to the northern suburb of Arnold (about 5 miles) in the north, Nottingham lies on Bunter sandstone. This is a sedimentary rock laid down some 210 million years ago, and now exists to a depth of about 200 feet (61.65 m.) near Nottingham. Due to its softness and massive character, the sandstone could readily be dug out to make the artificial caves or rock-cellars so characteristic of the city.

John Speede in 1610 wrote "many strange vaults hewed out of the rocks in this Towne are seene, and those vnder the Castle of an especiall note, one for the story of Christ his passion engrauen in the Walls, and cut by the hand of Dauid the second King of Scots, whilst he was therein detained Prisoner: Another therein Lord Mortimer was surprised in the Non-age of King Edward the third, since bearing the name of Mortimers hold; these haue their staires and seuerall roomes made artificiallie euen out of the rocks: as also in that Hill are dwelling houses with winding staires, windowes, chimneies and roome aboue roome wrought all out of the solid rock".

Age of the caves: The first mention of caves in Nottingham is an entry in Asser's "Life of King Alfred" written between 900 and 1000 A.D., stating that the old name for Nottingham was "Tigcuocobaucc" which he says in the British Tongue meant 'houses of caves'. So far no caves of Saxon date have been found at all, but recent excavations on Drury Hill have uncovered a grubenhaus of possibly mid Saxon date which was dug at least two feet into the rock, although its roof had been carried on upright posts projecting above ground.

The next documentary evidence is a reference of 1240 to the collapse of a 'bowe' under Nottingham Castle motte, interpreted as meaning the falling of a cave roof, which brought down part of the Castle wall. Our first real knowledge however, comes from caves sealed with rubbish datable to the mid 13th century and later. As archaeological excavation of Nottingham's caves progresses, earlier examples may come to light. At present it is not possible to date most caves except by their contents. As for the cave construction techniques, the same methods seem to have been used from the 13th to the 19th centuries. The most recent are rock-cut garages in Newcastle Drive in the Park, hewn with pneumatic chisels about 1965.

What were the caves used for ? Not all of them were dwellings. The majority were cellars of various kinds. We can distinguish at least eight known uses for which they were originally made, but it should be remembered that many were later adapted for other purposes.

- (1) Storage cellars, both domestic and commercial (liquor and wool)
- (2) Dwellings - these were usually in exposed cliff faces.
- (3) Industrial premises for malting and tanning.
- (4) Communication (rare, but tunnels were hewn for access and exit from Nottingham's medieval castle) although they are by no means so numerous or extensive as popular legend supposes.

### Caves of Nottingham cont'd.

- (5) Pleasure and leisure in the form of a few 19th century summerhouses and grottoes in the Park and 'drinking cellars' in the 18th century Nottingham.
- (6) Mines and quarries for sandstone, lying half a mile north of the medieval city.
- (7) Burial vaults, as on St. Mary's cemetery in Barker Gate.
- (8) Air raid shelters - comparatively few new caves were dug for this purpose, but some larger factories had them constructed for their workers. Second World War public shelters were extended and strengthened existing cave systems.

Some caves have been put to the most extraordinary uses. Apart from the occasional mushroom farm, some are rumoured to have been cock-fighting pits, others gambling dens; and at present social clubs, a rifle range and a cosmic ray research centre are among their varied functions.

Unfortunately, the general public has access to few of these strange and fascinating places, but an approach to a friendly publican in almost any public house in the area formerly occupied by the medieval city of Nottingham will usually reveal that his premises have 'rock cellars' or caves, and occasionally he may be persuaded to allow casual visitors in. This is true especially of the older pubs near the Castle. The "Trip to Jerusalem" and the "Salutation Inn" are well known in this respect.

With the increasing rate of redevelopment here, as elsewhere, Nottingham's caves are disappearing but efforts are now being made to preserve the more outstanding ones and eventually open suitable examples to the public.

A small number of caves have already been preserved. One of the city's few Ancient Monuments is the cave complex under No. 8 Castlegate but access to these is now restricted although they are amongst the most interesting and earliest datable in Nottingham (before c.1250 A.D.)

In the same area the unusually large group at the bottom of Drury Hill, the earliest of these in use before the late 13th century, is to remain undisturbed beneath the new Broad Marsh Centre as a tourist attraction. This complex is remarkable in containing the only subterranean tannery known in Britain. Two other caves on Drury Hill are also to be kept, although public access will not normally be possible.

Another type of cave, for mining building sand, is preserved under Peel Street - Mansfield Road. These mines are usually more extensive than the often older rock cellars in central Nottingham. In places they are more than one gallery deep and are even less regular in construction. Late 18th - early 19th century in date, these caves are the most recent open to public tours.

Eventually it is to be hoped that at least one typical example of all the kinds of cave found in Nottingham will be preserved so that the city's inhabitants, and foreign tourists as well, can see something of its unique heritage.

Alan MacCormick, Curator of  
Castle Museum, Nottingham.

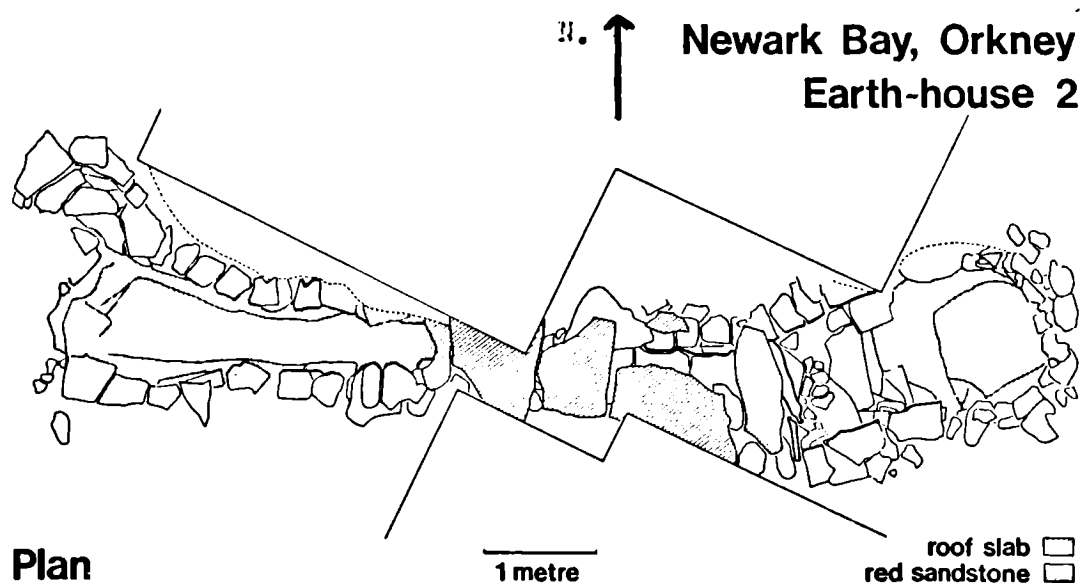
## EXCAVATIONS AT NEWARK BAY, DEERNESS, ORKNEY

Excavations were begun in the summer of 1968 at Newark Bay to recover a quantity of human skeletal material which had been revealed in the low sea cliff by wave action. The excavation was directed by Don Brothwell, then of the British Museum (Natural History) at South Kensington. The skeletal material proved to be a fragment of a substantial early Christian Norse cemetery, adjacent to a small chapel, which had subsequently been incorporated in a large "manor house", whose complete outline was never determined owing to its considerable size.

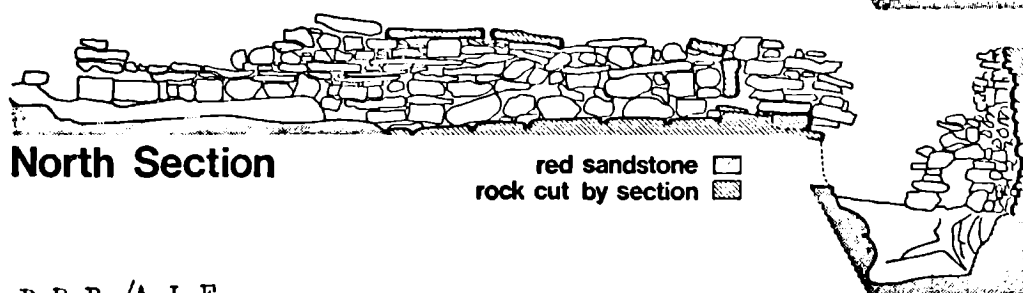
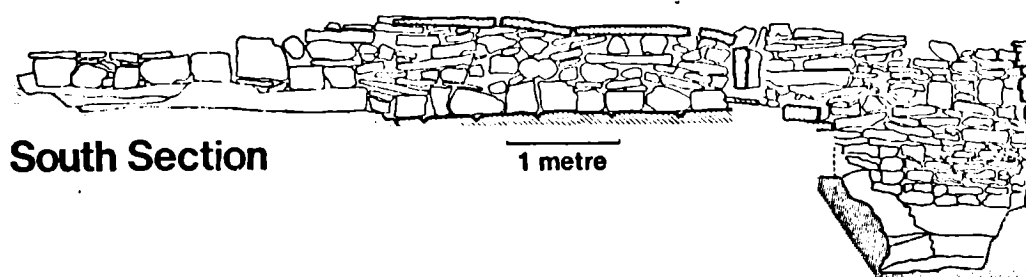
The sea cliff, some  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres high, also contained a stone-lined rectangular orifice, around 75 cms. high and 50 cms. wide. This constituted one end of a tunnel of 45 metres length, walled in dry stone, paved with large Caithness flagstones, locally abundant, and roofed with the same material in a dangerously ruinous condition. The tunnel contained a sterile silt of the surrounding sandstone clay, devoid of anything save the remains of the occasional intrusive rat. The sea cliff constitutes a false end to the tunnel as extensive 17th century quarrying operations caused the formation of Newark Bay itself and much alteration to the adjacent coastline, so the "end" of the tunnel is not necessarily its original, intended conclusion. The inland end of the tunnel consisted of a small chamber whose roof had been destroyed by works in the cemetery above, and whose walls had been robbed in antiquity, only the lowest course remaining to indicate the outline. Two Norse graves were partly intrusive into the chamber, and there was no evidence to suggest that the gravediggers were aware of the structure beneath.

During the removal of skeletons from the Eastern end of the cemetery, traces were discovered of another similar structure, and this latter was excavated both along its length and from above. Construction was similar to the previous structure: both small Caithness flagstones and sea-worn boulders were used in the dry walling, but the Western end floor was cut into the sandstone bedrock, which resulted in a narrowing of the tunnel width at its floor level. The tunnel flared slightly at the West end. The East end of this structure, is however, unique. The tunnel when excavated was blocked off by a large flagstone set on edge and arranged so it might be slid into a purpose-built recess on the North wall. This constituted a formidable obstacle to excavation along the tunnel, whose silt fill was again sterile, and the remaining excavation continued exclusively from above. This revealed the tunnel terminating in a generally circular chamber, dry stone walled down to a point some 60 cms. beneath the tunnel floor and thence cut in the basal sandstone to the bottom, about 130 cms. beneath the tunnel floor. The north side of the chamber had subsided into the chamber, but despite considerable care on the part of the excavators, the chamber and its fill were totally devoid of artefacts or animal remains of any kind. The quantity of tumble in the chamber was inadequate to include the roof of the chamber, but since the roof would presumably have been constructed by corbelling into the centre, the apex would no doubt have been removed when the manor house floor was laid, this latter being only 30-40 cms. above the tunnel roof. Over the immediate vicinity of the chamber there were three consecutive flagstone floors, so subsidence must have been a problem.

There are several parallels to this structure in Orkney, notably that at Grain, just outside Kirkwall. The plans are similar, with the same slight curve along the tunnel, and the same general proportion of tunnel length to chamber length. The structures at both Grain and Rennibister had pottery and small quantities of habitation refuse when first excavated, but had fairly level floors, with no trace of the 'pit' so obvious in the Newark Bay structure in the chamber.



### Newark Bay, Orkney Earth-house 2



D.R.B./A.L.F.

Several theories have been advanced to account for the function of these so-called "earth-houses"; they are all too small for other than emergency occupation. It has been suggested that the Newark Bay structure was originally virtually identical to Grain and Rennibister, and then subsequently recut as a well. This certainly explains the readiness with which the pit fills with water, but avoids any explanation of the presence of the blocking slab, which suggests a mortuary use or at least protection of some valuable object. As a defensive or refuge structure, an "earth-house" is valuable only so long as it is concealed, and a blocking slab is no defence against suffocation by smoke, immurement, or rapid excavation. The precise function of the structure remains a mystery, as does the reason for the proximity of two such structures. The excavation was concluded in 1974 by the tentative reconstruction of the north wall of the chamber; the site remains open to the elements. (With acknowledgements to the Director Don Brothwell)

Alan L. Fleck.

THE VIIIth SYMPOSIUM FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH INTO SOUTERRAINS  
HELD AT BERGERAC IN THE DORDOGNE, FRANCE

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Christopher Montague, representative of the Young People's section of Subterranea Britannica and Mrs. Sylvia Beamon, Publication Secretary attended the VIIIth Symposium arranged by the Association Bergeracoise d'Étude des Souterrains with the Société Française d'Étude des Souterrains between the 12th - 15th July.

The Symposium commenced at 8.30 a.m. on Saturday morning at the Chamber of Commerce. After the opening address by the President Professor Raymond Mauny, who gave a resume of last year's work and the proposed programme for the present congress, he stressed that we must always be very prudent when we try to explain the basic ideas or the supposed origins of a souterrain.

The proceedings began with Mrs. Beamon reading her paper on 'Ice Houses in Great Britain'. As this was the only paper to be read in English, Professor Mauny summarised in French immediately afterwards. Further commissions or papers were then read by representatives from Germany, Catalonia and France, the latter in particular, on those souterrains we were to visit during the next two days.

Half-way through the morning the assembly broke up and the members walked a short distance to L'Orangerie de Jardin Perdoux where Vin d'Honneur was offered by the Municipality dignitaries of Bergerac, which entailed short speeches and introductions by various people including the President and the Mayor, followed by the traditional glass of wine. The rest of the day was taken up by more commissions, most being illustrated by slides.

On Sunday the coach trip started in tropical weather to visit first a souterrain 'Cro du Renard' at Cunèges that comprised of two sections but very different from each other in appearance, for example, one was 1.80 m. in height whereas the other part was only 1.10 m. Next was the souterrain at Saint-Martin de Ferenssac which was a vast cluzeau (being the name by which souterrains are known in the district) situated in the proximity of a chapel on the top of a strategically important hill.

The coach continued to Penne d'Agenais where the group were received by the Mayor and Municipality of that town and offered Vin d'Honneur being Pernod of the area. Here was an exhibition of archaeological material from souterrains specially prepared for the benefit of the congressionalists. There was also a worthwhile visit to a private house which had several fosses ovoïdes (pits) perhaps used for grain storage.

After lunch there was an interesting visit to the Motte de Monsavignac at the town of Tourliac that were exceptional souterrains together with fosses under a fortified motte (perhaps in England we may have examples if we look). Amongst mobiliary items was a strange statuette representing a woman carrying a dog thought to be of the XIV century. The next stop was at the souterrain 'La Genèbre' at Faux, with two perpendicular entrances and where there was some interesting graffiti. The evening concluded with a 'mechoui' held near Bergerac for the members when sheep had been prepared and cooked for four hours over a pit of burning wood in accordance with Arab custom.

Monday morning commenced with commissions followed by the Annual General Meeting. Professor Mauny and Monsieur Andre Dufoix retired from office after the maximum term of four years service as President and Vice-President respectively. Monsieur P. Saumande is the new President but unfortunately

was unable to be present due to illness, and Dr. M. Poitel was elected after a ballot to the position of Vice-President. Besides the other officers elected onto the Council, Herr Karl Schwarzfischer is the representative with special responsibility for German souterrain affairs, H. Halbertsma for Holland and Mrs. Beamon for Great Britain. As these three members will be unable to attend the Committee Meetings regularly, it was necessary to create more seats to ensure a quorum at meetings.

Members reassembled after lunch to visit the remaining souterrains on the schedule to the North of Bergerac. First to those at Vallereuil et de Leysard with external fosses nearby, then a short distance away to the souterrain of 'Grange Neuve' at Saint-Martin-des Combes and finally to those of 'La Rocardie' at Liorac. After a communal dinner the Symposium came to a close.

Next year's Symposium will be at Chinon, Indre-Loire, France around the 14th July, and although it may seem a long way ahead, in three years' time it is anticipated that Great Britain will be the host country.

Sylvia P. Beamon.

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LETTER:

In response to an enquiry made to Mr. P. T. Telfer-Smollett, M.C., D.L., of Cameron House, Alexandria, Dunbartonshire, concerning a passage, he replied as follows:-

..."The original house here was built in the 1400's and there was a shaft which went down from the ground floor to the level of the Loch and then it branched off into two small tunnels, one to the Loch and the other to where there were woods at the back of the house.

We have excavated them to a depth of twenty feet or so but they are very heavily blocked with fallen roof, rubble, stones etc. and certainly not safe. They were used to escape by land or water as necessary I presume. They are not recorded as far as I know.

It may interest you to know that our old house, Place of Borhill now demolished and a school built over the site - had a secret passage - several hundred yards long and quite high, in which legend said a piper was eaten by rats in 1600 - this had an entrance behind the fireplace in the main room and I saw it in 1936. The building was pulled down in 1949."

In further correspondence, Mr. Telfer-Smollett mentions that the passages were cut through sand and gravel with stone and brick supports in places. He was referring in this instance to his present home.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

This year's Day Conference will be held at "Strathaird" Lucy Cavendish College, Lady Margaret Road, Cambridge on Saturday, 20th September commencing at 10 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. when besides the arranged programme, we welcome papers to be read by members (15 mins. approximately).

MORE DEFINITIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS  
(THESE WILL BE ADDED TO IN FUTURE ISSUES)

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- HYPOGEUM:** Underground chamber used as a communal burial place, storage room or dwelling place. In archaeology the term is restricted to the first of these. Various types are found: dug from earth or cut from rock, as were the Roman catacombs; or constructed of masonry, as at Mycenae. The corresponding Latin word is conditorium, which denotes a tomb to receive an inhumed body as opposed to cremation ashes. (Ref: Everyman's Encyclopaedia Vol. 6, p.417 Italy, 1969)  
Examples of Hypogea at Malta being temples of the Neolithic period. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 19, p.279).
- RERE-DORTERS OR LAVATORIES:** Monastic equivalents of the garderobe (a privy), often consisted of an open row of seats; positioned over conduits, they needed a good water supply to keep them flushed clean. A typical system would be where streams were led from higher ground into the conduits feeding one main tunnel.. This led into the monastery via its water-mill, if it had one. Water would be drawn off at the kitchen area for cooking, washing-up baking and brewing. Lead pipes led off to other areas, such as the laver, the infirmary and the abbots house. From the kitchen area onwards the stream either became a drain, or partly fed one, leading under the rere-dorter and away. In the centuries after the dissolution, changes led to these underground ways running dry and have sometimes attributed to stories of secret passages from monasteries. (J. Errand, Secret Passages & Hiding Places, p.65)
- RING WORKS:** Numerous in Ireland and can be compared to some extent with Dartmoor pounds. A circular, small earthen bank with a ditch outside it, is termed a rath on clay or drift country. On rocky ground the bank and ditch are replaced by a built masonry wall, known as a cashel (castellum) or caher (castra). Within is usually room for one or two dwellings often connected by a subterranean chamber or souterrain.
- SALLY-PORT:** A frequent explanation of a secret passage from a castle. The term sometimes used to describe an inconspicuous gate at the base of fortifications through which troops could rush-out or 'sally' forth - similar to a postern-gate or 'back door'. More usually, it refers to the approach to such an exit, a steep passage through castle walls, which after centuries of strife passed, generally became sealed up or used as a clandestine means of ingress and egress for non-military purposes. (J. Errand, op. cit. p.83.)
- SUBTERRANEAN AND ROCK CUT CHURCHES:** In North Africa and the Levant, cave churches are common. Crusaders returned to their native countries deeply impressed with the association of caves with everything that was held sacred.

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**ERRATUM:**

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Please note in Bulletin No. 1, page 5, in the short report of Herr Karl Schwarzfischer, line 6 should read "... thought these were possible reasons why the church had not ordered..."



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Society intend to maintain a bibliography and members will be regularly informed of books or articles brought to our attention.

Some suggested reading:

JANET and COLIN BORD Mysterious Britain (Paladin) St. Albans, Herts., 1974  
287 p. (Several souterrain illustrations are shown.)

EUAN W. MACKIE Scotland: An Archaeological Guide (Faber Paperback)  
London, 1975, 309 p.

F. T. WAINWRIGHT Souterrains of Southern Pictland, London, 1963.

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Scotland: An Archaeological Guide - Euan W. MacKie, Faber, £2.95.

Euan MacKie would not make a satisfactory Subterranea Britannica member: he is clearly not over-enthusiastic about souterrains. In his new book he catalogues eight such structures, presenting a plan and elevation of only one, and that an Orkney variant, wholly unrepresentative of the Scottish type. His entries for our specific interest are tantalisingly brief; that for Pitcur souterrain is but 2½ lines, that for Airlie but 4½. On the other hand, the two Orkney souterrains merit 42 lines between them, including detailed descriptions of finds, dimensions, structure, and so on. There must be a moral here somewhere - a shame that those Scottish souterrains which are the more readily accessible to the greater number of their cognoscenti should be the less well described. The Pitcur souterrain has after all 58 m. of passage and 18 m. of side passage, which hardly rates it as a minor example.

As a whole the book has, of course, its vices and its virtues, not the least of the former being a plethora of spelling mistakes; but the concept of the book as a guide rather than a companion is well executed. It is organised on a regional basis, indicating by symbols which monuments have been visited by the author, and which are in the tender care of the Department of the Environment. It gives simple straightforward descriptions of the location of the sites, by road number and by OS map number, and includes under its umbrella title some quite late Christian structures (the book is sub-titled 'From earliest times to 12th century AD').

In this plan there are, however, some lapses. In the prefatory summary of the Scottish archaeological sequence, the broch is scantily explained, perhaps an over-reaction by one who has published work on brochs already (mentioned in his large and useful Bibliography), but it is not until p. 161 that a photograph of a half-presentable broch appears (Dun Telve, Inverness), and not until p. 272 do we have an isometric drawing of the archetype at Mousa, the ideal of all those heaps of rubble up the East coast of North Scotland.

Despite all this, I regretted not having this guide in my car last summer, it is after all an immensely practical book: a rucksack, a spare-pocket book, not at all a sit-at-home-on-the-shelf book. At nearly £3. for an avowedly general, paperback, approach to a wide subject it is undeniably expensive, but recommended all the same.

Alan Fleck.

